

Pollinators Included in the Strategic Ambitions of the EU Green Deal: A Good Omen



The “Farm to Fork” (F2F) and “Biodiversity” strategies are at the core of the “Green Deal”, the policy framework proposed by the President of the European Commission von der Leyen.

Both strategies were eagerly awaited by actors from the agricultural sector, NGOs, agribusiness firms, *etc.* Both strategies were published on May 20, the World Bee Day, making for us a strong statement to link the future of EU policy to the protection of bees and the environment.

- **“Farm to Fork” and “Biodiversity” strategies: for a healthier European environment**

Pollinators are also part of both strategies [1]. In the Biodiversity strategy, the overall focus is on natural areas (protection, restoration, etc.). However, pollinators are explicitly mentioned in the subsection “Bringing nature back to agricultural land”, which explicitly refers to the F2F strategy. The two strategies aim at an exemplary reduction in the use of pesticides and the associated risks:

“Farmland birds and insects, particularly pollinators, are key indicators of the health of agroecosystems and are vital for agricultural production and food security. Their alarming decline must be reversed. As set out in the Farm to Fork Strategy, the Commission will take action to reduce by 50% the overall use of – and risk from – chemical pesticides by 2030 and reduce by 50% the use of more hazardous pesticides by 2030”.

To achieve these objectives and to ensure that they do not remain wishful thinking on paper, BeeLife proposes to integrate into the legislative proposal for the Common Agricultural Policy the proposals that we have been defending for more than a year, namely: put pollinators at the heart of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) [2] and create a “Pollinator” eco-scheme. Reducing the use of pesticides and their associated risks by 50% involves, in particular:

- Long rotations and greater crop diversification;

- Application of the principles of integrated pest management (Integrated Pest Management and effective implementation of the Directive on the sustainable use of pesticides);
- No preventive use of pesticides (including seed treatment) and no use of persistent pesticides (DT50 less than 15 days) with metabolites non-toxic to insects;
- *If pesticides treatment needs to be applied, apply only after sundown (when flying activity of pollinators is reduced)* for all types of plant protection products (i.e. insecticides, fungicides, herbicides).

BeeLife welcomes the reference to the full implementation of the EU Pollinators initiative [3] and its review by the end of 2020, and stands ready to work with the Commission, in particular on the implementation of the monitoring of pollinators.

Finally, the Biodiversity strategy sets out to “provide space for wild animals, plants, pollinators and natural pest regulators, there is an urgent need to bring back at least 10% of agricultural area under high-diversity landscape features. These include, inter alia, buffer strips, rotational or non-rotational fallow land, hedges, non-productive trees, terrace walls, and ponds”. BeeLife finds here the elements which make it possible to provide pollinators with not only food resources but also habitat (particularly for wild pollinators). Both are essential components of our requests and proposals for the future of pollinators.

With the Green Deal and its two strategies, the European Union has the appropriate framework to achieve the necessary transition. **Beekeepers and pollinators are two key elements of a sustainable food policy that must be brought into coherence at all scales from the local to the global level.** They are a direct link between Nature and our food system, especially considering the pollination services they provide (more than 75% of global food crop types rely on animal pollination [4]).

If so far the CAP has not succeeded in bringing together the protection of biodiversity and the production of healthy food as denounced by the European Court of Auditors [5], the situation invites us to rethink our food systems in the light of tomorrow's challenges. It is not too late, and **we invite Members of the European Parliament to propose beneficial measures and to make the necessary modifications so that the legislative proposal for the new CAP fully meets present and future sustainability challenges, not only of our food production system but also for the environment and biodiversity.**

[1] European Commission. 2020. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 Bringing nature back into our lives COM/2020/380 final. Available online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1590574123338&uri=CELEX:52020DC0380>

[2] BeeLife. 2019. A CAP for Pollinators. Available online: <https://link.bee-life.eu/cap-for-pollinators-publication>

[3] European Commission. 2018. EU Pollinators Initiative. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

EU Pollinators Initiative [COM(2018) 395]. Available online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/FR/TXT/?qid=1528213737113&uri=CELEX:52018DC0395>

[4] IPBES (2019). Summary for policymakers of the global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. Available online: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3553579>

[5] European Court of Auditors. 2020. Special Report 13/2020: Biodiversity on farmland: CAP contribution has not halted the decline. Available online:

<https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/DocItem.aspx?did=53892>